

From the Boston Herald.

PROHIBITION AND POLITICS.

An Interview Between a Reporter and a Prominent Temperance Man at Boston.

Q. It is said that prominent prohibitionists have advised great caution in the enforcement of the law, fearing a reaction against it. Is this so? A. Of course I can't tell what others have done, but so far as I know the sentiment of those who are really friends of the law is that it should be thoroughly enforced. If the people don't believe in it, let it be repealed, and we'll go to work to educate them up to it. But we believe a fair trial will be followed by results which will make the people believe in it.

Q. What do you call a fair trial? A. A thorough enforcement of the law for two or three years. We cannot be sure of that, but if the powers that be can have five months of it before the next election. That will partially tell it. The liquor dealers profess to believe that if it should be thoroughly enforced the people would repeat it. But they are very sure to do all they can to prevent its enforcement. They dare not allow it, for the diminution of crime and poverty would be so great as to ruin them within six months, that the people would insist on keeping it on the statute book. If the opponents of prohibition believe that the enforcement of the law will result in its repeal, let them use their influence to induce the mayor and aldermen to do their duty, and stop the sale of liquor. In that way the sentiment of the public can be ascertained.

Q. Of course the Butler movement will complicate matters considerably? A. Undoubtedly.

Q. How do prohibitionists feel about Gen. Butler's candidacy? A. Rather indifferent, so far as I know. Personally I worked hard for Butler two years ago, but I have entirely lost my enthusiasm for him. Q. But if you supported him two years ago, why not now? A. Things have changed within two years. Prohibitionists favored Gen. Butler's nomination simply as a means of obtaining a change in the party management. The Boston ring had run the party for years in the interests of rum, and we united with Butler because he was fighting our enemy. If the influence of the ring could be broken by Butler we were willing to see him elected. The purpose of a change was to be secured by the election of a man who would be able to see all of his old enemies, and to get rid of them as well as to win, with a call.

Q. Does not the same reason exist today for similar action? A. Hardly. The example of Frank Bird and a few of his friends has broken up the party. The control of the party came into the hands of the prohibitionists more fully than for some years. The last State convention nominated the party squarely to prohibition, and the Legislature has fulfilled the pledge made by the party. The nomination of Mr. Talbot for lieutenant governor over Mr. Stoddard also demonstrated that the Boston ring had lost the control of the party.

Q. Then the prohibitionists don't need Butler's assistance any more, and will not have him? A. I can only speak for myself, though I have talked with many who were Butler men two years ago, and I find them either indifferent or opposed to him. Q. But he would enforce the law, would he not? A. Yes I think so, but we need more than that now. We have got the law repealed, and one of the most important things to be done now is to keep the present law on the statute book. Gen. Butler was a good man to use to break up the ring which prevented the re-enactment of the present law, but he is not the man to unite the friends of prohibition for the maintenance of the law.

Q. Isn't he in favor of the law? A. I don't know that he ever said he was. He said he would enforce the law, but never that he believed in it. We want a man for governor who will not only enforce the law but throw the weight of his influence in favor of retaining it. The recent organization of the Butler club in New York is in the interest of license, and the talk among the liquor dealers that Gen. Butler is the man to unite upon in the present contingency, indicates either that they have mistaken their man or that he is not in favor of prohibition. He can very easily settle the matter by saying whether he is in favor of prohibition or license. That is, he has always dodged that issue by saying that he would enforce whatever law was on the statute book.

Q. Who then do prohibitionists favor? A. There is a very strong feeling in favor of Gov. Washburn's re-nomination. Q. Will he accept? A. I am inclined to think he would if convinced that he should succeed; but he would not want to be beaten in a campaign for the re-nomination. He is, however, the only available man to run against Butler, and it is more than possible that the opponents of the latter may find themselves compelled early in the contest to unite on him. If he can be reasonably certain of success he will probably allow his name to be used.

Q. And if so will he receive the support of prohibitionists? A. Very largely. He has not done all he wished, and possibly all he might, but he has used his influence in favor of the re-enactment of the prohibitory law, and we owe much of the success of our efforts in that direction to his strong words. We know where to find him. A single word from him, assuring his friends that he would not withdraw from the canvass, would gather a host of friends around him, and it is possible that the strong feeling in his favor is manifest itself in such a way as to secure such an assurance.

Q. But if he withdraws? A. That would be unfortunate. But that is the question of Butler and not of prohibition. Several names might be mentioned, but none of them would be sure of a large following. It is, of course, a candidate who while he is undoubtedly in favor of prohibition he is not pronounced enough in his opinions. He wants to please everybody, and is not positive upon any points where positiveness is likely to offend. He is popular among temperance men, but doesn't dare to say in unmistakable terms that he is in favor of prohibition. Hon. G. F. Hoar's name would be received with considerable favor in case Gov. Washburn withdraws, and would receive the support of many temperance men.

Q. Who else is mentioned? A. There has been some talk of a prominent Boston business man and heretofore identified with the prohibitory movement in one of its forms. I am not at liberty at present to mention his name and can only say that he is very popular here, and if he will consent himself fully to the position of the republican party, as enunciated in the Worcester platform, last fall, he will get a heavy vote, but not otherwise. I have heard no other names mentioned.

Q. You look for a lively campaign, then, upon this question? A. Undoubtedly, and if temperance men take hold of the work as they should they will be successful. The Christian and temperance people of the republican party have votes enough to control it if they go to work.

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